li Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

requirements or by religious observances. They do much to break the monotony and to provide a change.

HOUSEHOLD ARTICLES AND UTENSILS. Beds and cots are seldom, if ever, found in Kol houses. Those who dwell near cities, or work in the industrial centres sometimes own a cheap rope cot called a *khatiya*. The head man of the village may own a cot or two, and when one visits a village, this is often brought for the European guest to sit upon. The usual place for sleep is the mud floor of the dwelling. A blanket or mat may be all that is underneath, while in the hot weather not even this is availed of. Pillows are not used, but if it should be desired that the head be raised, it is probable that a small wooden stool a few inches high will be employed.

Fig. 5

Chairs, tables and the like, are never found. Anything that must be put away and cannot be hung over the rafters or the bamboo poles stretched across the walls is placed in a wooden chest. One usually finds some kind of a small box about the place which is locked. Valuables, however, are usually buried in a hole in the floor and the same completely *lepoed* to hide all trace of the spot.

The main articles in the house are those connected with food and drink. Gourd vessels are occasionally used as receptacles for storing water, but more commonly such vessels are made of earthenware or brass. Kols do not make either of these. The earthen vessels may be purchased cheaply in the bazaar from people of the Kumhar caste—the traditional potters. Food is also stored in them and in one of the Kol sub-divisions, the *Kurhas*, food should only be taken from a particular type of black earthenware dish. As a rule the various kinds of earthenware vessels are being replaced all over village India by those made of brass and aluminium.

The stone implements are the grindstone and the *sil*. The former consists usually of two pieces of round stone, although the bottom stone may be squarish. The upper stone, which is slightly smaller, is about 16" in diameter. It has a peg for a handle by which it is rotated. There is also a hole into which the grain is poured, though often the stone is simply lifted and the grain spread out over

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

on the *sil* salt and some spices are usually added. The dough is then moulded by hand into cakes of various sizes which are fried in sweet (*til*) oil or in clarified butter. *Bara* is usually eaten in this form though occasionally, if curd is available, it is soaked in that until soft. 252

Dahi is a form of sour milk, though a particular strain of bacteria seems to be required. A bit of old *dahi* is put into the new milk which has been sweetened and to which possibly a little sliced green chili has been added. This is set aside until the *dahi* is formed.

Khir. This is made by boiling rice in milk over a slow fire. Sugar is added to sweeten. When the mixture becomes creamy, chopped cocoanut, pistachio, and *ilachi* seeds are added to taste.

Batasa. Sugar is boiled with water until there is a very thick syrup. This is poured into a cocoanut shell which has a small hole in the bottom through which the syrup may drip. This is allowed to drip on cloth or paper forming small balls of various sizes. The product turns out to be a small whitish ball, spongy and very sweet.

FOOD TABOOS. There are certain things which Kols never eat. The use of beef and carrion is universally tabooed. The latter is eaten only by outcastes, and beef is not taken in deference to their Hindu neighbours. It was noted that pork is among the foods used. In Hinduized centres it is no longer eaten as a regular dish, but it is still partaken of at festival times when a young pig may be offered to the goddess and ceremonially eaten. Nothing that creeps on the ground should be eaten. 262 [564] [178 782]

Among other animals which they never kill nor eat are found the names of the parrot, sparrow, crow, kite and *galgal* (*Acridotheres tristis*).

INTOXICANTS. There is evidence to show that the Kols are not so addicted to the use of intoxicants as they were in previous years. At times of religious ceremonies liquor is still used quite freely and no penalty is attached. In one centre we were informed that the *panchayat* fines any man who is caught drinking liquor, and that they had totally abolished its use in that village. In other places they were not so successful, and yet there was a standard penalty of Rs. 10 or a community feast, when, in the judgment of the *panch* the circumstances warranted it. 273 [184 623 681]

Contact with city life seems to increase the use of liquor; and Kol dwellers in Jubbulpore have distinctly less feeling against it and more often indulge in its use than do the people living in the village. [369]

As far as we could learn there was no record of the Kols resorting to the illicit distillation of intoxicants. When they need liquor for their [443]

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This led to a separation between the brothers and they formed two divisions of the same family. The elder brother was the head of the family of Rautiya Kols and the younger of the Kurha Kols. 564 773

Another story relates that there were once five brothers of the same *kurhi*. Due to lack of food they were forced to separate: one went to the Binj mountains and founded the Binj *kurhi*; another went to a Thakuriya house, found shelter there, and from him are descended the Thakuriya Kols; another who took refuge with the Kumhars, the potters, was the ancestor of the Kurha sept. It is not unlikely that these stories contain the truth that this *kurhi* may have arisen from some marriage with Kumhars or perhaps miscegenation with them, or it may have reference to some occupational adventure on the part of some Kols.

Apparently the use of an earthen vessel by one sub-group does not prevent marriage within the whole group, nor does it limit it to that group, for marriages are possible between them and the Kathautiya Rautiyas who use wooden vessels from which to eat. There is the restriction, though, that Kurhas and Kathautiyas should not eat together unless they are related by marriage, and when this is the case they may compromise by the use of the ordinary brass plate. In a certain centre we were told that the only "pure Rautiyas" were those who used the *kurhs* and that there were also definite marriage restrictions between them and the users of the wooden bowl. This, if ever true, is disappearing. 564 [264]

1c. *Kathautiya*. Evidence goes to show that this *kurhi* is also a sub-group of the Rautiyas and differs from the Kurhas in that its members eat from a wooden bowl, called *kathauta* or *kathota*. The women folk, and occasionally the men, wear bits of wood in the lobes of their ears. During childhood the hole in the lobe is enlarged by the insertion of fibres from weeds, and from time to time a new bit is inserted in the attempt to enlarge the hole. We did not find that the Kathautiya Kols were consistent in the use of the wooden dish. At Sihora they told us that while they were Kathautiyas they had nevertheless given up the use of the *kathauta* and had adopted the ordinary brass plate. In other centres, notably one near Katni, they still use the bowl and cling to the custom tenaciously. As far as possible, they declared, all food should be prepared in wooden vessels, and it is expected that they should eat their food from such vessels. They do not manufacture their own *kathautas*, nor is any particular kind of wood used, but the dishes are made by Hindu carpenters from such wood as is available. At the time of death or eclipse of sun or moon the Kurha Kols must throw out all their earthenware dishes; the [415 264] [304 301] [178] [184] [252] [439] [82] [768 415]

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

585 woman, the smearing of a little *sendur* on her forehead, and the distribution of something to eat.

582 [178 184] **The Age for Marriage.** Because of the influence of Hinduism adult marriage among the Kols is not so much the rule as it is amongst certain more isolated Munda groups. The Kols generally recommend a fairly young age as the best for marriage. They told us that a boy should be married when between the ages of seven and ten and a girl when six or eight. Of course the young folks do not live together as [585] man and wife at these ages; the actual consummation of the marriage occurs at the *gauna* time when the boy is twelve to fifteen and the girl ten to twelve. The practice of early marriage is deeply ingrained in the social thought of India in general for it has been the tradition and India is tenacious in its observances of this tradition handed down from ancient times. The usual reason advanced is that it protects both parties from promiscuous sexual relations. From their own reports the Kols give the impression that early marriages are very common among them, yet an examination of Census Reports does not seem to indicate that Kols are particularly addicted to early marriages. The 171 report for 1931[1] lists eighty castes, tribes and races in the order of the incidence of child marriage. The Kols stand sixty-third on 582 the list with only 3.4% of their married females being under thirteen years of age. At the head of the list are found the Golars, a nomadic shepherd group with 21.9% of their married females being under thirteen. They are a relatively small group. But the Telis, a "clean" Hindu caste of oil makers which has a large number of members in the Central Provinces, report 13.8%. The Brahmins in the same Province have 3.5% and thus the Kols come just below them. From this evidence it would appear that the Kols are not extreme in their practice of early marriage. However, the definition of marriage may be different and may refer to the time of actual consummation and the living together of the couple as man and wife.

583 **Kinds of Marriage.** For the Kols there is but one approved and genuine form though, as we have noted, there are cases where people are living together and recognized as man and wife without the performance of a marriage ceremony in the accepted sense. Among the Birhors Roy reports ten different kinds of marriages which are recognized as valid.[2] Among the Dudh and Dhelki Kharias he lists five types of recognized marriages: (1) Regular, (2) Elopement,

1 *Census of India*, 1931, xiii, p. 180.
2 Roy, S. C., *The Birhors*, pp. 144 ff.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

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They said that she spreads and controls not only cholera and smallpox, but all sorts of diseases.

She should never be offered a chicken, because it is not valuable enough to please her. She desires a young goat or pig. The *bow* sacrifice is also pleasing to her and a cocoanut always is acceptable. Pots were noticed hung in trees, and it has been ascertained that these are for her to refresh herself on a hot day. In this way they hope to win her favour.

Phulmatimai. Is a sister of Sitalamai, goddess of smallpox, but causes a milder type of eruptive disease. An offering to Sitalamai is pleasing to her, and no further sacrifice need be offered.

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Shardamai. Shardamai is generally placed at the head of their pantheon by nearly all Kols. Her name may be traced to the Sanskrit word *sarada* meaning autumnal. Her temple is near Maihar about 100 miles north of Jubbulpore, near the borders of Rewa State. It is situated on a steep hill which rises about five hundred feet above the surrounding plain, and can easily be seen to the west of the railway line. The spot is a very popular place of pilgrimage, both for Kols and other tribes and castes. A visit to this spot elicited much information about her and her worship. She has six sisters, according to informants, among them being found Kali, Kalki and Kalchi. In [178] olden days animal sacrifices were made and the place ran with blood, but such are now prohibited by order of the authorities of Maihar State. Cocoanuts now represent the chief offering, but along with them *ghi*, *loban* (incense), *puris*, flowers, and the like are put before her. The hillside is literally covered with the shells of the cocoanuts broken before Shardamai. There are also images of other gods and goddesses under the same temple roof. These include Kali, the black goddess, wife of Siva; Narsingha, an incarnation of Vishnu; Bhagawan, the adorable one; Hanuman, the monkey god; Annapurna devi, here worshipped by the women desiring children; Chhatthi devi, worshipped on the sixth day after the child's birth, (and here the hair of the child's head is first shaved before her); Chandi devi, said to be a sister of Kali; Kotwali devi, the protector of the temple and the worshippers who come; and finally Kal Bhairo, said to be the son of Kali. In this strange company Shardamai is central and is *the* goddess of the whole.

While Shardamai dwells in Maihar and is localized as no other Kol deity, she is nevertheless also worshipped in the homes and at the village shrines. In some places a small earthen platform, about four feet square and raised some six inches above the ground, is sufficient. Upon this a trisul is stuck in the centre to represent the place of her

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159 In those days there was no road to Nagpur, but only a jungle pathway.
159 We went to Nagpur because we heard that a road was to be started
464 there which was going to Jubbulpore and they wanted Kols to do the work. We began to cut the forest from the Nagpur side and came toward Jubbulpore. But due to some *jadu tonka* (the spell of a magician) our Kols began to die and some of us were very much frightened. My father got permission to leave from the doctor and we came back to Jubbulpore another way, by the jungles of Mandala. Since that time we have lived here at Salivara (about six miles from Jubbulpore) where we have broken stones for the roads and done some other work if we have been able to find it.

159 I have seen two generations come and go and the men about us
[622] belong to the third. At present I am supervising work among the Kols of this place who break stones and they call me *Mukaddam* or the head of the village. My financial condition is much better than the other Kols here because I farm a piece of land and have some goats
[342] and cattle. I have a wife living with me but do not live in a house
178] with mud walls, but in a *jhopri* or hut. Why? Because our forefathers lived this way and I too prefer this mode of living.

The above life stories are the simple annals of Kols with varying backgrounds, and are recorded as they told them. They omit many things that one might like to know about, but give an insight into
[123] what seems important to them. These stories were obtained only after long acquaintance and friendly contact.

The sketch of Sunnulal reveals a simple man who has stuck to his village with the opportunities it afforded and who has not attempted to break through his environment into the affairs of the outside world. As a result he is contented, and from the economic point of view has everything a village man thinks necessary. He has never had to meet the stresses and strains of an alien type of life.

Bajranji has vivid memories of the great famine and a mother's successful efforts to avert disaster. He shows the independent spirit of the Kol who would rather make a contract for work than take a daily wage and be bossed around.

Motiram, who lives in the "aboriginal belt" has also successfully maintained his independence and built up for himself a satisfactory economic situation. He respects himself and feels he can boss the *panch* and coerce it.

Phaggu is the sad story of a man who has wandered here and there and at the end has nothing to show for it. He is out of harmony

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pounds of wheat for a day's work in the field. If a cash arrangement is entered into, the rate is 1½ annas for the same period of labour. In urban areas the situation is better. In 1911 the average wage was four annas a day. In 1921 it was six annas and ten years later it had increased to nine annas. It was our belief that seven years later wages had considerably fallen. Kol labourers in Jubbulpore industrial plants seldom received more than 5½ annas per day while for the same work in Katni and Maihar they received but four annas. As a rule women workers received about half the above.

It should be kept in mind that we have with the Kols the phenomenon of a primitive and backward people coming into the stream of rural and urban life. Many changes have occurred and many more will take place in the future.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. Kol people live together in groups, either in a section of the village or in a village of their own. Taking the village as a whole it would appear that they are economically well below the average. In certain places, however, they seem to be making a distinct advance as they continue to dwell there and develop a place for themselves in the life of the community. A resident of Barela, not himself a Kol, said that he had been watching them for many years. He said that twenty-five to thirty years ago they were very backward compared to their present condition. At that time they lived in grass huts, wore only loin cloths and in every respect were jungly, backward and inferior; but now the majority of Kols in Barela have houses with tiled roofs and thick mud walls, although the earlier type of dwelling is still occasionally found. This is indicated in Plate V. They now put on better clothing and in general their economic standard seems to be rising. In another place we found Kols putting tiles on their roofs which normally cost Rs. 20 per 1,000. These were being laid on top of the grass thatch. Country tile is more generally used and it costs from ten to twelve rupees to cover the house in this manner. Whenever the Kols are in contact with a somewhat higher culture and have a sense of security as regards lands and tenancy, they tend to make their houses much better than otherwise. Whenever we have asked groups why they have built and are living in such crude houses, they have told us that they do not know from one day to the next whether they will be staying there; and if they have to move on tomorrow they can easily pull up and leave. It is also said that this was the way their forefathers dwelt, and why should they do otherwise. Their employment is very uncertain and hence their houses are crude.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

426 under village conditions. Almost every time we were in the Kol
369 sections in and close to Jubbulpore we met Pathan money-lenders
who were there to collect what they could of interest due to them. It
● [178] appears that as Kols come into close contact with city life, their natural
hesitation to acquire a debt is broken down, and money is taken as a
loan which they have practically no expectation of being able
to repay.

426 It should also not be overlooked that in some sections there is a
state of perpetual debt on the part of the Kol villager. Money is not
exactly borrowed—it is rather a gift which cannot be paid back, but
which means a life-long obligation of service to the giver. This is
particularly true of conditions in Rewa State and the more backward
parts of the Central Provinces.

525 GAMBLING AND BEGGING. Some enquiries were also made
concerning gambling. The *panchayat* allows it on certain festival
[623] days such as *Dewali* when all groups gamble, and also it is allowed
occasionally in private. The gambling is not for large stakes and
most communities seem to avoid it. At present the most popular
form of gambling found mostly near cities is said to be with the use
of playing cards. Under village conditions a block of wood is taken
and on the six sides numbers are marked. These blocks are thrown
somewhat in the manner of dice. Coins are also thrown, singly and
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nothing of this type although the Census Report indicated that some
were returned as "beggars, vagrants and prostitutes". When we made
our enquiries they indicated that they felt a responsibility for those of
their own group who were in need, and that they tried to care for such
during the period of their dependency.

474 We did not find that they made use of co-operative societies, although
in the case of Barela, there was one which they might have used. As
184 far as we were able to observe no active interest was taken in politics,
665 and none of the village Kols reported as ever having cast a ballot. It
is otherwise with the Kols in Jubbulpore, for the Congress party has
been very active and all who have been eligible have been recorded
under its banner.

571 From many enquiries it is clear that among themselves, apart
575 from the *panchayat*, they have no clubs nor associations of any
kind.

181 From the above survey of the economic conditions existing among
735 the Kols it will have been seen that they are among the poor and dis-

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

CHAPTER XIV

THE KOL TRIBE IN TRANSITION

178 114 It is rather difficult to compare the Kols of today with the Kols of an earlier period. There is no material old enough and complete enough to show the changes that are occurring in Kol life and thought. The best single account of the Kols of Central India is found in Mr. William Crooke's Volumes on *The Tribes and Castes of the N. W. Provinces and Oudh*. This was written some fifty-five years ago, and while it contains something that may be used in a comparative way it is not full enough. Russell and Hiralal's book which is about thirty years old is not specific enough and is based more on general Munda customs than it is on actual Kols in Central India. And yet to use Crooke's account as a criterion of conditions among the Kols of Central India some fifty years ago would not be quite fair, as his account is based largely on the Kols in the southern edge of the United Provinces. Thus he is talking of the Northern Kols. Our investigations have been mainly among the Southern Kols, but we have checked our materials in Rewa State, the centre of Kol distribution. The fairly consistent account of the main outlines of Kol life and experience has led us to believe that we have a fairly accurate account of things as they are today. Nevertheless one senses a great unexplored world of belief, custom and outlook of which but the edge has been touched. No anthropologist would claim finality for any study such as this.

From our discussions with Kols and observations and comparisons there have clearly been changes among them in the economic, social and religious spheres of life.

178 464 ECONOMIC CHANGES. The striking thing from the economic angle is that this tribe, a jungle people originally, is moving away from the forests, first into agricultural centres where they earn their livelihood as farm coolies or tenant farmers, and then on into the industrial world as the factory coolie.

The further the Kols have moved from their jungle life the more industrialized they have become. Kols in Jubbulpore are nearly all engaged in factory work, or some other form of industrial work such as sawyers, and those yet further from Rewa are in manganese mines. [566 221] There are still large groups of Kols who are agricultural serfs and others who follow the wheat crop at the harvesting seasons. Along with other

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

members of the family able to work they leave their rude huts and then return three or four months later with a bit of money with which to buy clothes and the like. Some of the women accompany them, though not the children, and when they return at the end of the season there are a large number of infants which have been born to them in the fields as they have worked. 178 221 464

There are three strata among the Kols of today. From the economic view the factory coolies are better off. While wages are not high they are higher than can be won in agricultural or forest work and the income is steady. As forest people and agricultural serfs they may have enough to eat, but no money for anything else. Factory work brings three to four times the wage of the Kol who works away in the villages, and lasts the year round. Everywhere it is said that the Kols are the best group of workmen among those employed and often they are the main workers throughout a factory where unskilled labour is needed. As they are working in the factories they are also learning trades, and fifty years from now it may be found that Kols have taken up many trades and have made good. There is no occupational restriction as with many Hindu castes. 178 434 464 [463]

As the economic level is raised there is usually found a definite improvement in living conditions. Bad as the factory lines are they are much better than the rude huts of the jungle Kols. A Kol in Katni has built for himself a brick house of a very respectable appearance. In order to supplement their farm earnings the agricultural Kols still practise on the side their primitive occupations of wood and grass cutting. The industrial Kols are not able to do this, for they must work daily in the factory unless it happens to be closed on Sunday. On that day it will be found that a few Kols have gone out where wood may be cut and each brings back a load to the factory lines. This is cut for their own use and is not for sale. 178 511 [313]

Wherever Kols have been settled for some years they have told us how they first came and lived in grass huts and how gradually, as they became sure of their place there and as work became fairly regular and certain, that they have put up better living quarters and finally have built good mud houses with tiled roofs. More is owned by them than they ever had before. They possess livestock and there may be considerable amounts invested in jewellery. [231 454]

Judging from the pictures in books like Crooke, Russell and Hiralal and Roy's work on the Mundas and other related tribes, the Kols of today in Central India cover their persons with clothes much more completely than the earlier pictures represent. Today one finds but little exposure of the breasts by Kol women, and in the 178 291

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

178 291 [126] presence of men they usually cover their heads with their *saris*. It was difficult to get, for the anthropometric data, photographs of Kol women with their heads uncovered.

177 178 743 585 [558] SOCIAL CHANGES. In the social realm there are certain important changes which may be noted and yet there is a persistence in the older ways. This is characteristic of much of Indian life. Even fifty years ago the Brahmin priest was called for some Kol weddings and some other groups did not call him. The same holds true today, though now-a-days to call the *pandit* is the "right" thing to do, and those who do not call him, but manage things themselves, are looked down upon. Outside of the marriage cycle the Brahmin priest is nowhere else absolutely essential to Kol life, though occasional use is made of him at the name-giving ceremony and the throwing of ashes into the rivers Ganges or Nerbudda.

178 564 [177] It appears that there is a definite hardening of the social divisions within the Kol tribe. The Kols are apparently forming a miniature caste system within the tribe somewhat modelled after Hindu caste. These groups are endogamous and interdining is forbidden and in general they take the form of true castes[1]. If a Kol is asked about his race, he will probably not answer Kol, but give the subcaste: Rautiya, Thakuriya or another. Kols are very particular about their sub-divisions, and while there is some evidence available to show a desire to break down these distinctions, the main interest seems to be in their preservation. The system seems to be hardening and more firmly entrenched than ever. In discussing this, one Kol gathering said that they were trying to discourage this group consciousness and they were encouraging (1) intermarriage and (2) interdining. They felt that this was the proper order. As yet, however, to their knowledge, no actual cases of intermarriage or interdining had occurred.

177 HINDUIZATION. The process of Hinduization is essentially a social phenomenon. Considerable attention has been paid to Hindu influence in passing and the matter may be summed up here. Throughout the centuries and up till the present time there has been a persistent movement of primitive tribes into Hinduism. They have not come by conversion but by absorption. The term Hindu is very elastic and it often happens that a member of one of these primitive races does not know whether he is a Hindu or not. There has been no

1 Blunt, in *The Caste System of Northern India*, states that there are three characteristics of a caste: Heredity, Endogamy, and restrictions on Commensality. (pp. 1-2).

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

177 It has been noted that one of the evidences of the tribal groups becoming Hinduized was the abandonment of forest life and migratory 178 methods of cultivation and the settling down in villages. This the Kols seem to have done in a large part of Central India. Today they generally live in small hamlets of their own, and oftener than not these are attached to larger villages. They appear to have totally abandoned *Bewar* cultivation, the method of burning off some of the jungle, planting seeds in the scratched ashes, and moving on to some newly burnt place the following year. The Government has either stopped this altogether, or limited the area in which this can be done. [166] Most of the primitive tribes used to practise this. Even now though they live in villages there is still considerable seasonal migration. The villages near Jubbulpore are almost deserted in late March and April when the wheat is being harvested throughout the Nerbudda Valley. On our way to Rewa State at the end of April we passed hundreds of Kols along the Old Deccan road returning northwards to their homes in Rewa. They had their wives and new-born children with them, and were carrying their meagre possessions slung on the ends of bamboo poles across the shoulders. See plate XXIX.

The Kols do not admit that they are abandoning their tribal gods, or that they are accepting higher Hindu deities. As we have seen, they know very little of these higher deities other than their name, but [771] feel that they have always known them. The actual worship of the Kol centres around the more primitive type of animistic ideology, modified, no doubt, by years of contact with other groups.

177 There is a real question whether the word "Hinduization" is really an accurate one to describe the process. The movement is not a one-way process. Mundas *are* becoming "Hinduized", but Hinduism itself owes much to more primitive religions for it has constantly borrowed from them and unconsciously absorbed many of their concepts and practices. The religious life of the Kol is much akin to the villager [771] who calls himself a Hindu. Yet both are very unlike the "Aryan religion". For example, is the burning of the dead a Munda or a Hindu phenomenon? Generally it is thought of as a Hindu way of disposing of the dead, and it is overlooked that some Hindu sects bury their dead. But the earliest accounts of the Mundas show that they, too, did both[1].

CONCLUDING REMARKS. The Kols of today have been strongly influenced by Hinduism, but seemingly have not come much into contact with other faiths. It has been noted that they are found

1 Dalton, E. T., *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal.*

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181 ETHOS--general orientation of the culture; predominating interests, values, themes, and motivations; characterizations of the total culture (e.g., as "conservative," "competitive," "militaristic," "spirit-ridden," "Apollonian," "folk," "urban"); allegations and inferences as to national character; etc.

See also:

Cooperation and competition 47
Prevalent personality types 187
Ethics 877
General character of religion 771
Social philosophy 829

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

426 under village conditions. Almost every time we were in the Kol
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[623] concerning gambling. The *panchayat* allows it on certain festival days such as *Dewali* when all groups gamble, and also it is allowed occasionally in private. The gambling is not for large stakes and most communities seem to avoid it. At present the most popular form of gambling found mostly near cities is said to be with the use of playing cards. Under village conditions a block of wood is taken and on the six sides numbers are marked. These blocks are thrown somewhat in the manner of dice. Coins are also thrown, singly and in combination.

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474 We did not find that they made use of co-operative societies, although
184 in the case of Barela, there was one which they might have used. As
665 far as we were able to observe no active interest was taken in politics, and none of the village Kols reported as ever having cast a ballot. It is otherwise with the Kols in Jubbulpore, for the Congress party has been very active and all who have been eligible have been recorded under its banner.

571 From many enquiries it is clear that among themselves, apart
575 from the *panchayat*, they have no clubs nor associations of any kind.

181 From the above survey of the economic conditions existing among
735 the Kols it will have been seen that they are among the poor and dis-

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

possessed of the land. As a group they rank toward the bottom of the economic level; and in spite of their being such good workers it appears that there is but little chance for them to earn, in even a moderate way, enough to lift themselves from the pit in which they rest. Their burdens are many and their ignorance is great. And yet they do not worry much; and they have a saying to the effect that, "when there is food in the house why should one go out and labour?"

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among the most illiterate of the land. Up till now Christian Missions have started no work among them and there has been no attempt from any quarter to give them adequate facilities and opportunities whereby they may make some cultural advancement. There is great need for the improvement of their social and economic environment.

It would be wrong, however, to assume that the Kols are indifferent or that their aspirations are dormant. There are stirrings among them, which, unfortunately, have been taken advantage of by unscrupulous people. They are seeking for religious recognition, and we have traced two attempts, one near Jubbulpore, and the other near Katni, to erect Kol "temples". In both cases wide appeals were circulated and fairly large sums of money collected. In the first case not a single stone was laid and some thousands of rupees were swindled. Near Katni they had got as far as the foundation and plinth when the funds gave out.[1] We were accompanied by five Kols to this project about which they were very enthusiastic. Our interest in it stimulated them greatly. They complained that nobody cared for Kols and that Hindus thought of them as coolies who had no self-respect; so they wanted to show the world that they are really worthy of recognition. They were very self-conscious about this matter. It was said that if they can only reveal their real spirit and show that they are truly interested in religious things, then Hindus must respect them and no longer despise them. They showed a pathetic eagerness for this recognition and were pleased with our visit. They made the claim that so far, not one person outside their own community, had shown the least concern for their welfare, and that in spite of their conscientious and earnest work, no one recognized nor knew them.

As a tribe the Kols are self-respecting and industrious. They are cheerful in disposition and greatly enjoy social fellowship. We found them open-hearted and ready to answer questions when once their confidence had been gained. Like most primitive tribes they are honest and trustworthy. That they have deep emotional feelings can be seen from their music and songs. They enjoy nothing better than a long evening of song and drum. We found but little evidence of their disobedience to the rules of the tribal codes of morality.

Taken all in all the Kols are a lovable people and as one comes into intimate contact with them he feels that much ought to be done to alleviate many of the difficulties and handicaps under which they bravely carry on.

In their case it is difficult to make recommendations for the future. For years Kols have been gradually losing their identity as an

1 See plate XXVIII.

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182 FUNCTION--internal cultural consistency or its lack; allegations of integration or disintegration; adjustments of parts of the culture to one another; relation of cultural forms to biological and social needs and to physical environment; etc. See also:

Integrative process in culture change . . . . 178 Functional integration of kinship systems. . . 801

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some reason or other do not call in a low caste midwife. It was also reported that this group does not make any use of the Hindu priest and is very low in the social scale. Some claimed that this is really a group of Chamars—leather workers in the traditional sense, but Russell and Hiralal do not mention it in their glossary of caste divisions nor does Briggs report it. It is probably of minor significance.

16. *Bhariya* is the same as Bhumiya, see above.

17. *Borowar* does not appear in Russell and Hiralal nor in the list of tribe and caste responses in the 1931 Census. Nor is Barwar found there. Barwar, said to mean "disciple of the *bar* or banyan tree" (*Ficus indica*), is listed among the septs of the Kols in the north by Crooke as was seen in the previous note[1] on his findings. In a later book Crooke speaks of Barwars as a criminal tribe of Oudh.[2]

18. *Pawai*. One group gave the information that this *kurhi* lived in the south, 'Chawhan Khand'. In Singhbhum, Bengal, the Bhuiyas call themselves *Pawan-bans* meaning 'children of the wind'. The Bhuiya highlands are called Pawri Desh.[3] This may indicate a memory of a connection now long lost.

19. *Maubhaiya*. No trace nor information concerning this group could be found. It was reported only once.

The Census of 1891 attempted to record the names of subdivisions of castes in some detail, and the resultant list contained thousands of names of every kind. The Ahir alone had over 1,700 entries. The subdivisions of the Kols manifest the same tendency and show that the groups have absorbed into themselves members from higher and lower castes. The Thakuriyas probably contain a Rajput element and at the other end we find Kols mixed with Khangars, Murhas, Khairwars and Chamars. The Kols of today are probably pretty well mixed with other groups.

MAINTENANCE OF THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE. Kols who live in close contact with city life have frequently lost the sense of social solidarity which characterizes the Kols living under more primitive conditions. Various factors in city life, or near-city life, tend to make the same rigid social order impossible, and yet even under these conditions there is an attempt to maintain something of the older traditions.

Almost every village has an elderly man who may be considered in a sense the head-man of the community. He is usually called *Mahata* or literally, the leader. This man is the natural head of the

1 See page 32.
2 Crooke, W., *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, p. 166.
3 Russell and Hiralal, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. II, p. 315.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

many rooms and consequently they cannot maintain strict decency in living with their wives when the children grow up."[1] But the phenomenon is too widespread and is linked with too many factors to really bear this explanation. The house for the boys is as a rule the village guest house as well and at its centre there is a pole which is sometimes carved and differs in this respect only from other homes. The girls usually sleep with an elderly widow in another portion of the village. In some places it is reported that the boys and girls sleep together huddled "higgledy-piggledy."[2] We found no trace of these conditions among the Kols, though they may exist among those who live in close contact with other tribes who practice such customs. When Kols were asked how they managed to get along with one room and many children they replied that somehow they could tuck them all in. The absence of separate quarters strengthens the family tie and helps to make it a more stable and important unit. There was also no trace of sexual segregation, such as the separating of the husband and the wife, which would also tend to weaken the family.

1 Majumdar, R. C., *The Aborigines of Central India*, p. 80.
2 *Census of India*, 1931, xiii, i, p. 418.

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

586 623 692 the claim may be made that the woman is stolen. Judgment has been secured on this basis, and so most Kols prefer to pay the fine and not take chances in the court. This also tends to prevent a too easy divorce.

In regard to the children it was said that should the *panchayat* agree in favour of the husband, the children must go to him, with the exception that a mother may keep a nursing child. But when the nursing period is over and the child is weaned it must be handed over to the father. If she should begin to live with another man it must be given up at once. On the other hand should the man be proved a renegade and the *panch* decide that the woman is in the right she is allowed to keep the children, the property and the possessions. He is "driven out" with nothing but his personal effects. She is not required to uncover her head and nothing of a similar nature is required of him for he is simply told to *jao*—go! The woman however, should publicly say that she renounces him.

182 58 Such is a brief survey of the marriage customs of the Kols. Through these observances it is possible to trace a strong sense of social solidarity, and of the care exercised by both *panchayats* in adjudging the suitability of the matches. By the imposition of penalties which seek to discourage irregular unions the *panch* attempts to steady things. At the time of weddings there is a feeling of brotherhood and good fellowship, and in certain respects the wedding is the most important of all the social rites. Apart from its attendant ceremonies there is little of interest and excitement in the life of the average Kol. While there may be many instances of conscious or unconscious borrowing from Hindu sources, nevertheless this is not of recent occurrence, and probably goes back for hundreds of years, so far, indeed, that the Kols believe it to be their very own and assert: "These are the things we do, we do not know why we do them, but they are done by us."